



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Leader Stewart-Cousins Announces Bill Requiring State to Pay for Unfunded Mandates Passes Senate

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 11, 2013

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Albany, NY - A bill that requires the State to fund any mandated program imposed on local governments and school districts passed the Senate Monday with strong support from Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. The bill would protect local municipalities from bearing the cost of programs created and/ or originated by the State and allow local officials to set their own priorities without the possibility of future unfunded mandated programs disrupting their budgets.

“Unfunded mandates create real struggles for local governments and school districts, so any steps we can take to relieve those burdens are welcome news. Cash-strapped local governments have had to make difficult choices through the recession and unfunded mandates have made that task even more difficult. This legislation places the responsibility of funding State mandated programs where it belongs, on the State,” said Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

The legislation, S.1294, defines an unfunded mandate as “any state law, rule or regulation which establishes a new program requires a higher level of service for an existing program which a municipal corporation is required to provide, and which results in a net additional cost to such municipal corporation.” It requires the state to provide school districts and local

governments “compensation or funding... of the full amount of the net additional costs” of any unfunded mandate it imposed upon localities.

Leader Stewart-Cousins has been one of the leading voices in the Senate calling for mandate relief for local governments and school districts. Over the years, she has sponsored and passed numerous mandate relief laws which have saved taxpayer dollars and allowed for more efficient operation of government.

“I will continue to push my colleagues on the need for mandate reform because local governments are being crushed by these excessive costs. I was proud to support this bill in the Senate and hope it is ultimately enacted into law,” concluded Leader Stewart-Cousins.